

SAFETY ALERT



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS III CORPS AND FORT HOOD
FORT HOOD, TEXAS 76544-5056



AFZF-GA-SAFE

9 September 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Training Accident/HMMWV Runs Over Soldier -- Safety Alert 02-11

1. A few nights ago, a soldier was run over by a HMMWV while he was sleeping in an unapproved area. Fortunately, he did not suffer any fractures or life-threatening injuries and is now in stable condition. However, it doesn't require much imagination to realize that only by good graces did this incident not turn into the 11th training fatality for the Corps this year. Just as in several other recent serious training accidents, in this case too, the "planets aligned" to set the stage for a potential catastrophe. The "alignment" was allowed to occur when a leader and a soldier failed to follow known standards - and leadership did not follow through with enforcing and supervising those known standards.

2. The soldier's unit was attached to another battalion for the training event and all personnel had been briefed on the designated sleeping area. The soldier had just completed guard duty and bedded down to sleep beside his vehicle - not in the designated sleeping area. Several soldiers in a HMMWV, with a Lieutenant as TC, entered the area where a perimeter guard redirected them because they were in the wrong area. Instead of dismounting to ground guide his vehicle through the occupied area IAW bivouac/assembly area SOP, the TC and the other passenger remained in the vehicle while driving through the area. They noticed soldiers sleeping in a designated area and circled around it in order to avoid running over anybody. In the process, they did not see the soldier who was sleeping next to his vehicle outside the designated sleeping area -- but nonetheless within the assembly area -- driving over the soldier's head and thorax. The soldier's action, not following trained standards and electing to sleep outside the designated area was one of a series of "planets" setting the stage for this incident. His leaders, not enforcing known standards and checking on their sleeping soldiers to ensure compliance was the another "planet." The TC, not doing his duty to ensure his vehicle was ground guided through the known occupied area culminated the "alignment of the planets," resulting in the near tragedy.

3. This close-call accident was preventable in several ways: soldiers complying with standards and taking responsibility for their own safety, leaders ensuring soldiers understand the guidance, leaders enforcing and supervising standards within their squads/crews/sections. Some common rules for bivouac/sleeping areas for leaders to establish and reinforce safe bivouac/sleep sites:

- designate and mark the area, develop safe traffic plan, ensure the area is away from roads and vehicle trails
- ensure perimeter guards are adequately briefed, especially to require vehicles to stop and post ground guides
- leaders ensure soldiers sleep only in designated areas
- don't allow soldiers to sleep in front of, behind, under vehicles, or in vehicles with the engine running.
- consider roving guards
- leaders enforce standards

4. We can all learn from this incident and use its lessons in future pre-training safety briefings. It is clear that a fully engaged leadership could have avoided this near tragedy. Your 100% dedication to accident prevention through risk management, personnel accountability, and setting / enforcing standards is what it will take for us to preclude these types of accidents from continuing to plague us.

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B. B. BELL
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

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